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## TUWHIT! TUWHOO!

SEVEN Dials, and a dull foggy day.

Of all the misnomers in which London doth abound, the greatest, I think, is Seven Dials. The Haymarket, where no one ever sees hay; Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the miserable ghost of a garden reminds you forcibly of the mockery of the name, can't compare with Seven Dials, where, if you waited till the sun told you what o'clock it was, you would stand a chance of never knowing the time of day at all. Seven Dials! Where are the Dials? There are seven streets, certainly, converging to a circle like the lines upon a sun-dial, but unless seven spokes in a nave make seven coach-wheels, or the three legs of Man, all tending to one point, make three men, I cannot see the justness of the appellation.

But what was I doing at Seven Dials this dull foggy day? Why, Seven Dials is the head-quarters of the bird-fancying fraternity, and I was looking for an owl.

What on earth induced my small but pestilent relative to be so anxious for an owl, I am quite unable to conjecture. That any one should desire an owl for a pet, seems to me absurd: a creature that gets up when you go to bed, and that goes to bed when you get up; whose sole amusement is to station itself on a high place and hoot; a creature that can't see you till you can't see it, or if it does catch a glimpse of you, pecks like fury! I can't understand it. If he were given, this small but pestilent relative of mine, to scorning delights, and living laborious days—to borrowing the mid-night hours for study high, I could have understood it; but that's about the last thing he would think of doing. Or if he had the power of seeing better in the dark than in the light—as an old friend of mine once had, who used to come down to breakfast stumbling and blinking, and shading his eyes, and to go to bed along a dark passage with both hands in his pockets, never knocking himself against the corners, or tripping over the steps—then the matter would be clear enough. But I have no reason for believing that his organs

of vision suffer from any peculiarities of this kind. It is no explanation at all to say that he wanted an owl because Snuffles Major had an owl, for that only removes the difficulty one step further back. Why did Snuffles Major want an owl? In fact, that seems to me to make the difficulty all the greater, for had not he heard Snuffles's owl hoot? Of course he had. Was not he present when the owl pecked Snuffles Minor to the bone? Certainly he was. Was he himself exempt from those shocks that flesh—intimately acquainted with one who keeps an owl—is heir to? He knows very well that he was not. However, it was useless reasoning with him. The owl once in his head, the nature of the bird seemed to take possession of him, and to render him, in consequence, blind to all my arguments, though clear as daylight.

This, then, was the reason for my presence in the neighbourhood of Seven Dials. I wandered slowly about that haunt of bird-fanciers, peering in here and there, like a kind of ornithological Diogenes, vainly trying to discover amongst the occupants of those cruel cages the intellectual features of the bird of Pallas. I confess that my knowledge of the natural history of owls is exceedingly limited. My acquaintance with their habits goes no further than that they have a habit of complaining to the moon, and of conveying their ideas about things in general by the two meaningless words that head this article. It was only natural, therefore, that in my search I should not trust to my eyes alone, but should listen eagerly, as I passed every bird-shop, for those accents made familiar to me by the poets; more especially as I could not help feeling that never owl had better reason to complain than when it found itself a prisoner in that peculiar locality. It may be asked, why did I not settle the matter at once by entering one shop after another, and inquiring whether they had an owl in stock or not. Why, the fact is, I have a strong dislike for what is termed the Fancy. Bird-fanciers, in my mind, are much of the same breed as rat-catchers, dog-fighters, prize-fighters, and the like; and it was this feeling of aversion, I suppose, that induced me, before

trusting myself amongst characters of that kind, to try the Pandemonium Bazaar in Oxford Street, where everything, but especially baby-linen, can be bought by a not too economical public. Thither, accordingly, I went, and having prepared myself for the worst by a stroll through the picture-gallery—which surely justifies the name of Pandemonium—I took my way into the small conservatory-looking place at the back of the bazaar, and searched for an owl. There were several cockatoos—wise and happy birds cockatoos; birds that won't be floored by misfortune, but make their very chains minister to their amusement, and, hanging by one leg with their heads downwards, swing contentedly to and fro, and bite their thumbs at Fortune and her wheel. There were canaries, goldfish, and monkeys, but not an owl, not a single owl. So I walked up to a man who, from his wearing an apron and a look of defiance, I knew must be a person in authority, and remarked that I did not think there was an owl amongst the birds. Official sulkiness could go no further than it did in this man. He never said: 'No, there wasn't!' He didn't even sneer and say: 'Oh, wasn't there!' He never uttered a syllable, he never threw me a glance; he preserved an obstinate silence, and stared at a monkey. So I had to express myself more plainly.

'Have you an owl?'

'D'you want a howl?' he returned—to the monkey.

'Of course I do, or I shouldn't have asked the question; but as I see you haven't one'—and I turned away.

'No, but I could get you one,' he said.

'What would be the price of it?'

'A crown.'

'That's rather a large sum to give for an owl.'

'I s'pose I have to go and fetch it. Ain't I to be paid for shoe-leather?'

'Well, I shall want it sent into the country; so I shall require a cage'—

'Eighteenpence!'

'And packing'—

'Sixpence!'

'Let me see, then,' I said, summing up. 'The owl, five shillings; the cage, eighteenpence'—

'Say two bob,' he said, correcting me.

'The packing, sixpence; seven and sixpence. Thank you. I'll try elsewhere.' And I left him, still regarding the monkey with a stare of such exceeding venom that the poor animal remained fixed and motionless in its cage, as if fascinated by the gaze of a rattlesnake.

So back to Seven Dials I went, and entered shop after shop in vain. Every shop very much resembled every other—very dirty to look at, very nasty to smell, and, what a good deal surprised me at first, as silent as death, as far as the birds were concerned. How could they sing their songs in so strange a land? It was only natural that they should not sing, of course; and yet, entering a room filled with birds, not one of which utters a note, inspires a feeling of awe; much the same hushed feeling that one has on entering a church before the service begins, where crowds of women may be seen—all holding their tongues.

The birds consisted of larks, linnets, thrushes, a few blackbirds, now and then a magpie, occasionally a jackdaw or a hawk, some barn-door fowls; but anywhere and everywhere, pigeons. You kick a

cage as you enter the shop—pigeons! You knock your hat against a suspended cage—pigeons again! All very dirty; all looking as if their feathers had been stroked the wrong way; and all, poor wretches! trying their very utmost to go to sleep and forget all about it. The Seven Dialists, however, do not confine themselves to birds. In one cage, rats, my especial abhorrence, turn up their wicked faces, and shew their vicious front teeth. In the next, their natural enemies, ferrets, pink-eyed and cunning, come daintily to the bars to have a look at me. In another, rabbits, the only comfortable-looking creatures in the place—for the melancholy of the hare does not extend to the rabbit—take their cabbage as contentedly as usual. In one shop, I nearly fell a victim to a goat; a monster, long-bearded and truculent, that from a given point was perpetually describing a circle, as if he had been the original Goat and Compasses. In another shop, two bull-dogs, fastened, like the lions in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, on each side of the way, tried my nerves fearfully; and if the proprietor had not called from the inside: 'Don't be afraid of the bull-pups, sir; they're tied up!' I should e'en, like Mistrust and Timorous, have turned and gone back. By the way, the owner of this shop was the only cheerful bird-fancier I encountered in my day's work. They were as melancholy, as surly a set of men as it has ever been my lot to have aught to do with; and I am not surprised at it. In the first place, trade seemed to be bad. Of all the shops that I entered, and there must have been a score of them at least, only one had a customer: a lady who was seeking an incredibly small dog-collar, which the fancier was 'out of.' Then, again, the locality is calculated to lower the spirits. I don't know what the melancholy of Moorditch may be—I confess I never saw the place—the melancholy of Seven Dials is quite enough for me. Such vice, such want, such misery! Men with low foreheads, and mouths that seem made for oaths; women with faces that perhaps were pretty once, but in which the death's-head, that lies beneath all faces however fair, shews with terrible plainness now; and little creatures, hollow-cheeked and dull-eyed, who ought to be children, but who swear like men. Then the bird-fancier's profession, as I said before, is not a cheerful one. The wonder is how any one could be cheerful with those birds, that look so profoundly unhappy, for his constant companions. The man with the bull-pups, however, seemed to be proof against all these depressing influences. As I entered, he came blithely forward, dressed in a blouse, and having an old smoking-cap stuck on one side of his head, and to my question, 'Have you an owl?' replied cheerfully: 'A howl! what kind of a howl?'

'Oh, a common barn-owl.'

'A common barn! you wants a common barn. Well'—surveying several cages containing larks—'I'm afraid I ain't got one at present. You're sure it's a barn, and not a screech as you're arter?'

'Why, have you got a screech-owl?'

'Well, no, I've not; not just at this time. I'm quite out o' howls at present. You're certain it ain't a jackdaw as you're requiring?'

'Quite certain; thank you,' I said, walking to the door.

'Ah! it's unfortunate, very. I suppose nothing in the pie-line would answer your purpose?'

'The pie-line!' I repeated, stopping.

'Magpies,' said the bird-fancier.

'O no, no; I want an owl.'

'Just so,' said the bird-fancier—'just so.'

And I picked my way between the bull-dogs, and went out. But so anxious was he to do business, that when I passed his shop some ten minutes afterwards, he was still at the door, and called out in a voice distinctly audible, I should think, in Oxford Street: 'I say, master, it ain't a ferret arter all, I suppose?'

At length, just when I thought I must give in, or apply to the Woods and Forests Office as a last resource—just when I began to have a suspicion that owl was only another name for dodo, I tried a shop which proved a lucky one, although the first thing that I saw in it was an old woman, and the next a raven. Undeterred by these bad omens, I entered. Behind the counter sat a girl, whose face bore traces of exposure to all the elements—except water. She had a burn-mark on her brow; cheeks so ill-treated by the wind that they looked as if they had been rubbed with a nutmeg-grater, and then sprinkled with salt; and, I grieve to say, dirt. There was no owl visible in the shop; but I had come by this time to the conviction, that if there were an owl, it would most likely be kept in the cellar, as being a place better suited to its eyesight than the shop, where it would be exposed to the full glare of Seven Dial daylight. So I turned to the girl, and asked my usual question: 'Have you an owl?'

'Mother!' cried the girl to the old woman before mentioned, who, in her ragged and dishevelled condition, looked less like an omen of misfortune than Misfortune's self—'mother! gentleman wants a owl.'

'Feyther!' screamed the old woman, throwing up a back-window, and directing her voice up the outside of the house—by which I concluded that the head of the establishment was engaged at the moment in taking a nest in the spout—'feyther! party arter a howl.'

'Ain't got no howl, then,' replied a voice rather high up and distant, but getting nearer and more distinct as it proceeded. 'What'll he be arter next? Praps he'd like a heagill. Ain't he in search of a vultur? Don't he want a hostridge? What's his views with regard to a bird o' perrydise? Ain't got no howl;' appearing at back, and standing confessed a bird-fancier in all his charms.

Such a beginning did not promise well at all; but though surly, like all his tribe, this man concealed the feelings of a gentleman beneath manners—I am sorry to say not altogether—peculiar to the Fancy. So, after satisfying his conscience by returning a few sulky answers, he at last confessed that, though he had not an owl himself, he had a friend who had one. This friend had offered him the owl the previous day for two shillings, but the fancier, for reasons connected with the advent of certain bills which would more than tax all his resources, had declined to purchase the bird.

'You see,' he said to me, 'my money's too much out already. There's a crown in that there cage behind you; there's three-and-six in this 'ere squirl' [usually pronounced *squirrel* out of Seven Dials]—that there lark's got a shillin' of it; and there's sixpence in each o' them bullfinches. I've been buyin' in stock a precious sight too fast lately; but when a fellow does see a couple like them behind you going for a crown [not a lion and unicorn,

but a brace of hawks], or a lady's poodle, so beautiful that I've seen 'em in ixterics at the sight of him, going dog cheap, what mortal can resist 'em? But I can get you the howl; or, if you like to go arter it yourself, I'll tell you who's got it.'

Whereupon, with a desire to oblige quite unaccountable in a bird-fancier, and with a willingness to assist a rival, sufficiently uncommon amongst tradesmen of any kind, he gave me the address of the owner of the owl, and to this address I went as fast as possible.

When I entered the shop, I found the principal partner of the firm conducting the business correspondence at the back, while his wife and daughter were engaged in cleaning the cages and preparing the birds for Sunday.

'I believe you have an owl.'

'Jim,' said the fancier to an idle-looking fellow, who was amusing himself with stabbing at a black-bird with a long straw, 'just run over and fetch that there howl.'

Jim, transferring the straw from the blackbird's cage to his own mouth, disappeared; and without deigning to notice me even by a glance, the bird-fancier resumed his writing. I had seen too many of his trade that day to feel at all indignant at this conduct; and when I perceived the trouble his literary labour gave him, and the terrible muscular exertions necessary, for he struggled till he groaned again, I considered myself amply revenged.

'Won't you take a chair, sir?' said the fancier's daughter.

Though charmed with the politeness of this fancy fair one, I declined the seat, as the chair, spite of a hasty wipe with an apron, bore evident tokens of the calling of its proprietor, and amused myself, while waiting Jim's return, with looking at the birds, and observing what was going on in the shop.

'We're in rayther a dirty state, sir,' said the mistress—certainly with great truth as regarded herself; 'but it's our cleaning-up day, you see.'

That I might see that this was the case, she snatched up a cage that held a thrush—of thrushes the most dejected and wretched—inserted a carving-knife in the slit just above the floor of the cage, and began to cut and scrape in the most vigorous and reckless manner; the poor bird having nothing for it during this painful process but to perform a kind of Perfect Cure dance, hopping over the knife every time it passed, and knocking its head against the roof regularly as it did so.

In one of the cages was a kingfisher—such a shabby, second-hand-looking kingfisher, as different from a kingfisher in a state of freedom, as a uniform hanging at the door of some Jew old clothesman is from what the same uniform was when it came first from the tailor's. Here was a jay, and there was a hawk; and what bird was this next? Suppose you were watching the removal of the prisoners from one of the police-courts to the prisoners' van—you see this drunken woman after that, and one burglar-headed individual after another cross the little bit of pavement between the steps of the court and the van, and though you may probably pity the culprits, yet you have at the same time a feeling that it's only what might be expected. But suppose amongst these jail-birds you were suddenly to perceive an intimate friend of your own, an honest, sober man, whose last thought would be to injure anybody—



well, if you did see this, your feelings on the occasion would be very much like what mine were when, amongst these wild birds, I saw 'cabinéd, cribbed, confined,' a poor, dirty, harmless, melancholy duck.

Upon a shelf were some cages marked 'Warranted cock-linnets, 5d.' One of these unhappy warranted cocks was in a perfect frenzy at not being able to get out. It looked round with a wild tearful eye, dashed its beak through the bars, flew frantically at the roof of its cage, as if it thought it opened like a sedan; and if for a moment it ceased its desperate labour, you could see its whole body beat with the beating of its heart—and all for fivepence.

At last, to my great relief, Jim returned with the owl: a noble bird, whose philosophical composure contrasted strongly with the useless rage of the poor linnet. Jim set down the cage so roughly as almost to throw the owl off its balance, but it recovered itself in a moment, smoothed its ruffled plumes, winked, and looked perfect wisdom in a beak and feathers. I was so struck with the appearance of the bird, that it did not take long to arrange matters; more especially as the bird-fancier asked only half-a-crown for it—just half what I should have had to pay for the Pandemonium owl—and shoe-leather.

Need I tell how I bore my prize home in triumph; how it was placed in the page's pantry, to the mutual discomfort of bird and Buttons, for the Buttons teased the bird, and the bird pecked the Buttons; how the owl, taking advantage of a full moon, complained to that friendly planet in such an unbearable manner that half the parish complained in the morning; how I was only too happy to pack it up, and despatch it per G. W. R.; how my small but pestilent relative received it safely; or how he keeps it in a dark coach-house, and calls it Barnacles!

#### TALISMANS AND PORTENTS.

In searching for the inventor of talismans, we can find no person to whom the invention is attributed who lived previous to Zoroaster, said by some to be Cham, the son of Noah, which others, and among them Rabbi Chomer, who translated some valuable Persian writings into Hebrew, flatly deny. The difference of opinion respecting his identity is not wider than the estimate of his qualities, some saying that he was little better than an impostor, others averring that he was not only one of the most learned, but one of the best of men, and instance his tract *Memlechetti Halaal* (The Kingdom of God) as a proof of this latter assertion; satisfactory evidence is wanting to prove that he was really the author of this work, but most ancient writers are ready enough to admit that he was the originator of talismans. The use of talismans can be traced back to a very early period in the world's history, and there is good reason to suppose that the images possessed by Laban, and the teraphim of Micah, were nothing else. Still, whether they were objects of worship, or merely used for divination or the foretelling of events, is doubtful. Aben Ezra affirms that they were in the form of sun-dials, and were used to ascertain the proper time for practising divination; while another Jew equally learned, Rabbi Eliezer, says they were in the form of men, and were made under certain constellations, the influences of which caused them

to speak at certain hours. He gives this as the reason why Rachel stole her father's images, because she feared that, if she left them behind her, he might by their means ascertain the route taken by her husband Jacob. That they were not objects of worship seems to follow from the circumstance that they are not spoken of as such, and the improbability that Jacob would have lived so many years with and married the daughters of an idolater. This opinion of Eliezer is supported by Cardinal Cajetan, Vatablus, Clarius, Sanctes, Mercerus, and sundry others, all men of mark in their day, though their very names are almost unknown among the present generation.

Of the mode of constructing these teraphim, Elias Levita gives a very terrible description. It is to the effect, that they first killed a man who was the first-born son of his mother, tore off his head, embalmed it, and then placed it on a gold plate, on which was inscribed the name of the particular demon whose services were to be put in requisition, and afterwards hung it up in the midst of lamps, to be adored as occasion required.

These talismans were of two kinds, natural and artificial. Some were supposed to ward off evil, others to cure it. Among natural talismans were the bloodstone, which, it was averred, would stop the flow of blood if applied to a wound; and the figure of the serpent found on stones in quarries, which we now know to be fossil, was said to be a certain cure for the bite of that reptile. The belief in these things became almost universal in Europe as the knowledge of Arabic literature spread among the few men eminent for their scientific and linguistic learning. Boyle, the great philosopher, who was subject to violent bleeding at the nose, says that he could always stop it by pressing a bit of moss taken from a dead man's skull against the skin till it became warm. Bacon relates that, when he was at Paris, his hands were covered with warts, and that they were all removed by the wife of our ambassador there by rubbing them with a piece of rind of bacon, and afterwards nailing the rind to a post with the fat side towards the south. A distinguished Moravian physician told Zwelfer that he preserved his family and friends from the plague, and certain unpleasant things which accompanied or followed it, by means of toad lozenges worn as talismans.

In the making of artificial talismans, it was essential that they should be made under particular constellations, according to the purpose they were intended to serve, otherwise they would be of no effect; the influence of the stars on all mundane operations, from the making of talismans to bread-making, being assumed, for, as Gaffarel says, 'we see by experience that biscuits made at one time will keep sound, whereas others, made before or after, though made of the like flour, and in every respect like them, speedily become full of maggots;' and Barnerio, an Italian, in his work entitled *Regole sopra la Carta Marina*, argues very learnedly in the same sense with respect to articles manufactured in different countries, and the building of ships; as does Vitruvius also in regard to buildings. To drive away serpents (Antonius Mizaldus recommends us), take a square plate of copper, and engrave two serpents on it when the second face of Aries is ascendant. To drive away rats and mice, take a similar plate, and engrave on it a figure of a rat and a mouse when the third face of Capricorn

is ascendant. To draw fish together in shoals, so as to render them more easily caught, cut the figure of a fish on a piece of lead when the first face of Pisces or Aquarius is ascendant. To drive wolves away, it was only requisite to engrave on a like plate the image of a wolf with his feet in shackles, and two mastiffs barking at him, when the second face of Sagittarius was in the ascendant. To make a huntsman successful in his pursuit of game, he only wanted a talisman representing him with bent bow and a drawn arrow which had been engraved under the sign of Sagittarius, the engraver repeating at the time of performing the operation: 'Per hanc imaginem ligo omnes feras Silvestres, cervos, apros, leprores, ut nulla meam venationem subterfugiat, quin optatum portionem et prædam mihi semper relinquat.' I may mention, that an individual once made at least a hundred talismans according to these directions, but, as he complained, without finding any of them answer, perhaps from some vice in their construction, for he says, that making them afterwards on an improved principle, he succeeded the very first time.

If I were to quote the cures effected by talismans, in the case of bites by serpents, mad dogs, scorpions, and so forth, contained in the writings of Almansor, Rhodoam, and Serapion alone, I should fill a volume, instead of half-a-dozen columns; I will therefore only instance a few talismans, the power of which was of more general application. At Constantinople, there was an image of a serpent made of brass set up, which kept serpents away from the city and the surrounding country; but when this was broken on the entry of Mohammed II., these reptiles increased amazingly. Storks were likewise kept out of the city by similar means, but this talisman, too, having been destroyed, these birds have greatly increased and multiplied. The same Apollonius who made the image of the stork also made a talisman by means of which he drove all the gnats out of Antioch. Zachder says, that an image of a woman with a crescent, placed in a field near Mecca, kept away all beasts and reptiles, and greatly influenced the fertility of these fields, which since its removal have become barren. A leaden talisman made by Achmet Ben-Tolon, Calif of Egypt, says Julius Scaliger, drove away crocodiles; and Joseph Scaliger relates that an image of a scorpion engraved on a stone built into a certain tower, was of such efficacy that it kept away both serpents and scorpions from the city in which it stood, and any of these reptiles brought within its influence died instantly. Another traveller's story is told in the Travels of De Breeves to this effect. 'In the town of Tripoli, a certain enchanted stone, bearing the image of a scorpion, is built in the wall which runs from the gate to the sea-side, which was placed there by a magician to keep out venomous reptiles, in the same way as the brazen serpent at Constantinople did; and a little above the city there is a cave full of the bones of serpents who died at that time. Constantinople, indeed, seems to have been wonderfully well furnished with these talismans, for another author mentions that great numbers were destroyed during the sieges to which it was subjected, and he especially mentions a figure of a brazen horse, with a horseman on his back, which preserved the city from contagion. After the destruction of this figure, he says the pestilence raged so fiercely that, in less than four

months, at least a hundred and fifty thousand were carried off by it, and a repetition of the calamity occurred regularly in July and August during succeeding years. Nor were these talismans confined to Constantinople and the large cities only, they were numerous all over Asia, from which they spread to Europe at a very remote period, if we may believe Frey, who assures us that the Druids employed them with great advantage. Virgil is said to have kept the city of Naples free from flies by means of a brazen fly he set up on one of the city gates, which retained its power for only eight years, unfortunately, as its services at the present time would be peculiarly grateful. Moreover, he made an image of a horse-leech on a gold plate, and threw it into a well in the same city, which had the effect of driving the horse-leeches out of the place in vast multitudes. Joseph Scaliger, who relates some of these wonders, and who appears to have been a believer in the power of talismans, tells a very good story of a man who made one to keep the flies out of his house, which he hung up in his window, and almost immediately a fly settled upon it, and did not depart without leaving traces of his having been there. Clever mechanicians improved on these talismans without pretending that they possessed supernatural powers. In a Latin work, published at Nuremberg, it is related that one Architas made a wooden dove which could fly; and more recently, a fly was made which could use its wings to as good purpose, and also an eagle. Cassiodorus tells us of serpents and birds made of brass by Severinus Botius, which could hiss and sing, and so on.

Galen informs us that a king of Egypt, writing nearly 700 years B.C., avers that a green jasper cut in the form of a dragon, worn against the stomach, strengthened the digestion. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus tells us that King Solomon cured epilepsy by means of a plant, assisted by a form of words he pronounced; he further relates, that he himself saw a Jewish priest do the same thing successfully in the presence of Vespasian and his sons, and others. Sometimes the talisman was not employed, and words alone were used to avert misfortunes; as, for instance, to drive away hail, the ancient Egyptians, according to Rabbi Moses, used to cause four women to place themselves in an indescribable posture, and then pronounce certain words, upon which the hailstorm ceased. Another method of producing a like result is described by Vieron: 'Make first the sign of the cross; then take three of the hailstones that first fell, and throw them in the fire in the name of the Trinity; then repeat the Lord's Prayer two or three times over; then read the Gospel of St John; then make the sign of the cross towards the heavens, and on the earth, east, west, north, and south, saying three times: "Per Evangelica dicta fugiat tempestas ista." If by the time you have done all this, the storm has not ceased, you may conclude that it was not caused by malice, as he says, meaning that it was not the work of a magician.

The custom of placing 'figure-heads' in the bows of our ships seems to be derived from the Greeks, who fixed at the head of their vessels certain talismanic figures, which had nothing to do with the images of their deities, these being placed at the stern of the vessel. Many of the mythological fables of the Greeks may have taken their

rise from this source, and by the adoption of this hypothesis, some of these have been very ingeniously explained. Thus, the fable of Jupiter having carried off Europa under the form of a bull, may be explained by supposing that the vessel which bore away that young woman had a talisman at its prow made under the constellation Taurus, and therefore consisted of a metal plate, on which a bull was engraved, while at the stern of the vessel stood the statue of Jupiter, worshipped by the sailors.

As regards portents, it was held by the Jewish rabbins of old that every letter of the Hebrew alphabet could be seen figured by the stars in the heavens on a clear night, and that these stars by their change of position made up certain words, by a careful reading of which the devout student might arrive at a knowledge of any important events about to befall the world or the nations thereof. The greatest importance, however, was attached to the new stars which made their appearance, it being supposed that the Creator of the universe placed them where they were seen for the express purpose that they might, by forming new combinations, indicate to those who regarded His works that He would visit a nation, or the world in general, with punishment for its transgressions, or as a warning to the inhabitants that He would do so if they did not change their manner of living. Hipparchus mentions one which appeared one hundred and twenty-five years before Christ, which was supposed to presage the approaching end of the Grecian monarchy. Another appeared in Scorpio, which is described by Messabulah and Albumazar, who saw it, as shining with such brilliancy as to give a light equal to a fourth of that given by the moon. In the reign of the Emperor Adrian, another new star appeared, and another again in the reign of Otho, both between the constellations of Cepheus and Cassiopeia. Near the latter constellation, a new star appeared in 1264, with a motion towards the north; and three hundred years later, there appeared in the chain of the same constellation a star which remained visible for six months. Others have likewise appeared at rare intervals down to our own days; and a long list might be extracted from the writings of St Augustine, Pliny, Eustathius, Germanicus, and a score or so of other writers of old. Cardan asserted that every calamity which had happened to the great kingdoms of the world down to his day had been foretold by the star in the tip of the tail of the Great Bear, in combination with other stars. It is also affirmed by Rabbi Chomer and others, that the invasion of Greece by the Mohammedans was foretold by the position of five of the principal stars, which shone directly above that country for some time, which together formed the letters of the Hebrew word *charab*, signifying 'to be desolate'; and desolated it certainly was. At an anterior period, the same number of stars shone over Jerusalem, though differently arranged; these were taken to form a Hebrew word, signifying 'to break' or 'cast down,' and soon after, the Jews were carried away captives to Babylon. Eleven stars which shone above the temple at Jerusalem, at a subsequent period, were assumed to form a word signifying to utterly reject and forsake, and their appearance was followed immediately afterwards by the burning of the temple by the Assyrians. To these letters, certain numbers were attached,

which, added together, were supposed to shew the precise period when the calamity foreseen should take place; for example, the duration of the Assyrian monarchy was fixed by their sages at two hundred and eighty years; a conclusion which they derived from four stars directly over it, indicating the letters *r, a, b*, which, added together, made up that number. The duration of the Grecian empire, that of the Roman consulate, and the monarchy, was estimated in the same way. To come down to more recent times, Rabbi Chomer, who was a most devout student of these celestial hieroglyphics, observing that seven stars, which shone over the vast empire of the Turks, made up a word signifying 'feeble' or 'languishing,' reckoned together the numbers indicated by the letters, and from this predicted that the power of that empire would be broken about 1655.

Comets were almost universally assumed to be portents of national or world visitations of a calamitous character, the precise nature of the calamity being indicated by the shape of the meteor. Thus, if it were round, clear, and bright, it was supposed to foretell the birth of one who was to have a powerful influence among nations. Such a comet was said to have appeared in the year in which Mithridates was born, which, Justin says, continued visible for seventy days, and filled up so large a space in the heavens that its light exceeded that of the sun. If the comet had a cone-like figure, it was supposed to mean that great losses would arise from fire, or as indicative of a devastating tyranny. If it were wavy, and of an undefined watery appearance, it portended seditions among the people, and extensive inundations. If it assumed the figure of a horn, then it foretold an invasion on a grand scale. If the shape of a sword, it denoted war and desolation, as also did a comet shaped like a trumpet. Other meteors were also held to be significant, and among these the rainbow was said to be shaped as it is, as a mournful sign of the deluge, the shape being that of the Hebrew letter *caph*, the number of which was twenty, which number indicated sorrow among the ancients.

The instances on record of the appearance of comets before great catastrophes are numerous. One was visible for seventy-five days before the Peloponnesian wars; another, before the Athenians suffered such dreadful losses in Sicily; another before the break-up of the Roman empire; another previous to the destruction of Corinth and Thebes; another previous to the invasion of the Goths; and another before the breaking out of the civil wars between Caesar and Pompey. A comet in the shape of a horn preceded the invasion of Greece by Xerxes; one in the shape of a sword hung over Jerusalem for a year previous to its destruction by Titus; and nobody will require to be reminded of the terrible wars that have followed the appearance of the brilliant comet of four years since.

Another class of omens, though never visible to us in these days, was to be found in the appearance of armies in the heavens. Prodiges of this kind were numerous during the siege of Jerusalem. Besides the omen already alluded to, one shewed itself in the form of a brilliant radiance round the altar and the temple; another was the opening of the brass gate of the interior sacrum (which was so enormously heavy that it required the combined



strength of twenty men to move it), without being touched by hands. Josephus mentions these things as though there could be no difficulty in believing them; but when he relates other omens, capable of easy explanation, they appear to him so much more wonderful that he thinks it necessary to adopt a far more positive tone: 'For what,' he says, 'I am going to recite would, I am persuaded, appear monstrous and fabulous, was it not well attested by persons who were eye-witnesses; for there were seen before sunset chariots wheeling aloft in the air all over the country, and armed companies rushing through the clouds, and throwing up trenches round cities.' Similar instances have been observed repeatedly since. Previous to the battle of Ivry, fought between the Huguenots and the League, there was such a representation in the heavens. At a celebration of some religious ceremony, the congregation was so surprised to perceive a large red cross in the air, that they fell on their knees, and began to pray with unusual fervour, till somebody pointed out that it resembled and was nothing more than a reflection of a large red cross beside them. The same thing, if I mistake not, occurred at Milan, where the people adored what they conceived to be an angel of gigantic stature visible in the atmosphere, till it was proved beyond a doubt that it was only the reflection of a statue. The spirit of the Harz mountains, which used to be seen on the Brocken, was another similar instance of reflection. Dr Scoresby, in the journal of his Voyage in the Arctic Regions, relates that he was becoming anxious about his companion-ship, when it was suddenly seen in the air, the hull and every rope and spar so perfectly represented that she was immediately recognised; and by sailing in the direction in which it was seen, they came up with her, though at the time the image was visible she was fifteen degrees below the horizon. I myself witnessed a like phenomenon when sailing in a Chinese barge through the pass of Amoy, only, instead of being a vessel, it was a building erected on the summit of a lofty hill. This explains the appearance of armed men in the air, their apparent movement being due to the motion of the reflecting surface; it being, of course, the same thing as regards appearances whether the objects reflected move and the cloud remains stationary, or vice versa.

Livy records numerous omens of sundry kinds, and Pliny also relates instances of voices heard in the air; but these have far less interest for us than those mentioned by Josephus. Writing of the siege of Jerusalem, he says: 'And on the festival day, which is called Pentecost, the priests going into the temple in the night to perform their services according to custom, said they heard at first a kind of motion and noise, and then the voice as of a thick multitude pronouncing aloud: *Let us remove hence!*' But, he continues, what seems more wonderful than all, was the fact of 'one Jesus, a plebeian and a countryman, four years before the war broke out, while the city enjoyed a profound peace, and plenty of provisions was in every place, on coming to the solemnity, whereat it is customary for all the Jews to pitch their tents in honour of God, broke out suddenly, as he stood by the temple, into the following rapture: *A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against the city and against the temple, a voice against bride-*

*grooms and against brides, and a voice against all people,* which words he uttered day and night, proclaiming them loudly throughout all the streets of the city. Some of the principal Jews, who were offended at these words, took the fellow, and severely whipped him, who made no manner of defence for himself, neither complained against those who scourged him, but persisted in proclaiming the words he had first used. This procedure making the Jewish magistrates imagine that the fellow's emotion was somewhat divine, they carried him before the Roman governor, and he was scourged to the very bones before him, yet never uttered a single entreaty for mercy, or shed tears, but at every stroke exclaimed in an exceedingly mournful voice: *Woe, woe to Jerusalem.* To all the questions of Albinus, he made no reply, but by repeating *Woe, woe to Jerusalem.* All this time, and to the breaking out of the war, he was never observed to enter the houses of any of the citizens, nor to use any other words than those above mentioned; neither did he wish ill to any one, though revilings and blows were inflicted on him daily, nor did he thank those who gave him food. Though he continued these mournful cries for seven years and five months, his voice never once became hoarse, nor did he seem to grow weary. At the end of this time, he being one day on the walls, cried with a loud voice: *Woe, woe to this city, and to the temple, and to the people;* then pausing a little, he added: *Woe to myself also,* and immediately a stone from one of the Roman engines smote him and killed him.' And further on, in reference to omens and the blindness of the Jews, he says: 'They made a square temple after Antonia was pulled down, though it was written in one of their own oracles, *Then shall the city and the temple be taken when the temple appears in the figure of a square.* But what was the main thing to push them on to the maintenance of the war was an ambiguous prophecy found in their sacred books, that about those times one should arise out of their own borders, and put the whole world under his obedience.' This is rather a long extract from Josephus, but as his works are more talked of than read now a days, it will be novel to many.

Manifestations of a similar kind on a smaller scale are said to have foretold the approaching end of many noted personages: thus, the Emperor Tacitus and Julian the Apostate are said to have been warned by a ghastly, emaciated, melancholy-looking apparition; the Emperor Pertinax, by the image of a man holding a drawn sword in his hand; Henry III., by the apparition of a figure on horseback; and Alexander III., king of Scotland, by a spectre which was said to have danced with him in public. A certain Italian family is said never to have lost one of its members without a figure having first made its appearance in a sitting posture beside the fireplace; and the same or something similar is recorded of other families. But the omens which may be regarded as truthful are those which, by their occurrence, tend to produce the evils which follow them: thus, about 1333, the appearance of meteors was followed by extraordinary terrestrial phenomena in China. First, a drought, followed by famine, and then such terrific rains, that Chinese records affirm upwards of four hundred thousand persons were drowned in one province alone. Internal convulsions shook the earth, huge chasms opened, mountains sunk into the earth, and a lake

of a hundred leagues in extent took their place. Crops were destroyed, and the vegetation spared by the inundations was entirely devoured by locusts. These disasters were followed by intense famine, and finally by the Black Death.

### LOST SIR MASSINGBERD.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.—THE FAIRY'S WAND.

THERE are but few of us, I fear, who can say: 'Though I should die suddenly, and at the most unlooked-for time, there will be nothing left behind me which I would have destroyed, even though I had had the opportunity.' Of course, there are none who can boast that they are at peace with all mankind; that they leave nothing unrepented of or unatoned for; that their human affairs and social relations are exactly where they would have wished them to be. But independent of these matters, neglected by the very best of us, how eagerly must many a man desire, between the warning and swift stroke of death, that he had had but a little time—a little strength to set, not indeed his house in order, but his desk and his note-book. What a cruel shock have many a family received, after they have lost the Head whom they have worshipped so many years, by discovering, where they looked for no such thing, *after his death*, that he had all along (as will be thought) been even such a one, not as themselves, but worse—as they whom they had been taught by his own self to look upon with contempt, or at least with pity; as they who, by contrast with himself, were persons base and vile. Is there no letter, reader, ragged and time-worn perhaps, but still legible, lying among that heap of correspondence you intend to winnow some day—which it will be better to burn, *now*? Is there no half-forgotten gift, meant for your own eyes alone, when they were brighter than at present, which it would be well to make an end of this very day? Can you say: 'Even though I do not return home to-night, or ever again, but am smashed by a railway locomotive, or driven over by a bus, or poisoned in a cab, yet there will be nothing of mine, nothing when my friends take stock of my personal effects, of which I need be ashamed.' If so, thou art a good man indeed—or one of exceeding prudence. Above all things, my friends, be good, for that is best; but if not, at least be prudent. Let your memories be sullied with no stain, at all events, in the thoughts of those you leave at home. The actions of the unjust blossom in their dust into flowers compared with which the deadly nightshade is as the violet or the rose. The satirist tells us that in a week, a month, a year at most, the memory of a dead man dies even from the hearts of those he held most dear. This is not true; but the satirist would have been severer yet, and have spoken truth as well, had he said that the memory of a dead man, so far as his vice and wickedness are concerned, dies not at all among his kin. It is spoken of in whispers by the purest, and renders them less pure; it is made light of by the vicious, but only to excuse their wrongful acts by a worse example. 'Wild as I may be, I am not so wild as the governor was in his day,' is a terrible legacy of comfort to leave behind to one's son.

It is possible that even Sir Massingberd Heath

may at some far-back time have deemed it necessary to lay to his soul some flattering unction of this kind. There were Sir Wentworth and Sir Nicholas, and many a Heath to extenuate his acts, if bad example might do it. But the time came to him, and very early in life, when he had no longer this slender justification, since he had outdone his worse progenitor in vice and folly. Mr Clint had known, Mr Long had guessed—we all of us had suspected more or less that the lost baronet's life had been evil beyond that of an ordinary man; but the dumb revelations which were made concerning it in the necessary examination of his papers, were simply shocking. After destroying these, the next approach to cleansing Fairburn Hall was to discharge all the indoor domestics. Mr Richard Gilmore resented this conduct towards a faithful servant of the family, as he styled himself, very bitterly; but he departed with the rest, laden, there is little doubt, with a very considerable plunder. Presently the upholsterers came down from town with a great following of work-people, and a caravan of wagons bearing costly furniture; then a host of servants, selected with as much care as was possible, replaced the exiles; and when all was ready within and without—the waste places of the grounds being reclaimed, and put upon the same footing with those which hitherto had alone been 'kept up'—Sir Marmaduke Heath and his wife themselves took possession of Fairburn Hall.

Art had already done much to change that sombre house into a comfortable as well as splendid mansion; but the presence of its new mistress did more than all to rescue it from the long tyranny of decay and gloom. Beneath her smile, the shadows of the past could take no shape, but vanished, thin and pale. She would allow them nowhere resting-place. Where they had been wont to gather thickest to her husband's eyes, she quelled them by her radiant presence, day and night. The Oak Parlour and its adjoining bedroom she formed into a double boudoir for her own sweet self; and straightway all bat-winged, harpy-headed memories, the brood of evil deeds, flew from it as the skirts of Night before the dawn, and in their place an angel-throng came fluttering in, and made it their abode. No stage-fairy, wand in hand, ever effected transformation-scene more charming and complete. One fear, and one alone, now agitated Marmaduke's heart—for the safety of his priceless wife in her approaching trial. He would have gladly cancelled nature's gracious promise, and lived childless all his days, rather than any risk should befall Lucy. His friends, his servants, and the villagers, brimful of hope that there should be an heir to Fairburn, flowed over in earnest congratulations; but for his part, he felt apprehensive only. His heart experienced no yearning for the child who might endanger the mother. In accordance with her plan of ignoring all that had gone before of shame and sorrow, and regenerating evil places with a baptism of joy, Lady Heath had chosen the state-chamber itself as her sleeping apartment, and there in due time she safely brought forth a son. Upon his knees, Marmaduke thanked Heaven for the blessing which was thus vouchsafed to him, but above all, in that it had brought with it no curse. Verily had the house of mourning become the house of feasting, and the chamber of sorrow the chamber of mirth. The unconscious father had been sitting



by the library fire, endeavouring vainly to distract his mind from what was occurring up stairs, and turning his eyes restlessly ever and anon towards the door, when the voice of Dr Sitwell suddenly broke the silence.

'Sir Marmaduke, I congratulate you; you have a son and heir.'

'And my wife?' cried the husband impatiently.

'She is as well as can possibly be expected, I do assure you.'

'You are very welcome,' exclaimed the young baronet; 'and would have been so, although you had chosen to burst your way in with a torpedo. But I confess you startled me a good deal.'

'I am afraid I did,' returned the doctor, in a voice like a stream of milk and honey, 'although it was not my intention to do so. But the fact is, I did not come in by the door at all. Her ladyship desired that I should bring you the good news by way of Jacob's Ladder; and I may add, that you may come back with me that way and see her yourself for just one quarter of a minute.'

So even Jacob's Ladder was made a pleasant thoroughfare to Marmaduke, and dearer from that hour than all staircases of wood and stone.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—FOUND.

Now, when Marmaduke junior—who was named also Peter, to mark the regard which both its parents had for my poor self—became of the ripe age of fourteen weeks or so, and the spring had so far advanced upon the summer as to admit of open-air rejoicings, it was determined that the advent of the heir of Fairburn should be celebrated with all due honour. This would have been done before—for Lady Heath had soon recovered her strength, and the child was reported to be a miracle of health and plumpness—had it not been for the backwardness of the season. The Hall had of course made merry upon the matter long ago, and if all the poor in the place had not done so, it was from no want of materials in the way of creature-comfort supplied by the young Squire. But what Marmaduke had waited for was settled fine weather, in order that the Chase might be filled by merry-makers, whose happiness should cleanse it from all memories of woe and wrong. Much of these, it is true, had been effaced already; a portion of the Park had been given up to the villagers for cricket and other sports—a grant common enough now, but one almost unexampled in those days—and the right of way which Sir Massingberd had spent so many hundreds in opposing, had been voluntarily surrendered. Oliver Bradford still retained his office, but being almost bedridden, inspired less terror than of yore among evil-doers; this was not so much to be regretted, however, since there was now little want, and therefore few poachers in Fairburn, while the general popularity of the young Squire lessened even those. I am afraid that if the new owner had heard a gun discharged at night in the Home Spinney itself, it is doubtful whether he would have laid down his book, or hesitated more than usual in his vain attempt to checkmate his wife at chess, in order to listen for the second barrel. The terror of the Lost Baronet had long been fading from his old domain; and upon this occasion, when old and young were all invited to make holiday in those once almost unknown retreats of hare and deer, there was no urchin but

was determined—by no means single-handed, however, to explore them thoroughly. The very Wolsey Oak which the ravens had made their quarters was not shunned, but in the great space about it, races were run, and dances danced, and its vast trunk was made the very head-quarters of childish merriment. These young folks did not affect the company of their elders, except when the gongs gave signal from the various marquees that there was food afoot, when they flocked to meet their parents at the heaped-up boards with a dutiful celerity. The higher class of tenantry were upon the lawn, and among them mixed with stately condescension a goodly number of the county aristocracy. I remember that some of the latter introduced upon this occasion the new dance called the quadrille, which had just arrived from Paris at that time. It had come over in the bad company of the waltz; but that lively measure was held to be too indecorous to be imported to Fairburn under its new régime. Everybody, when out of earshot of the host and hostess, was talking about the change that had taken place in this respect.

'How odd this all seems,' quoth Squire Broadacres to his neighbour, Mr Flinthert, heir of the late lamented admiral. 'None of us, I suppose, have been at the Hall here for this quarter of a century.'

'Ay, that at least,' quoth the other. 'Of course, it is a great matter to see people in the Heaths' position properly conducted as to morals. But I doubt whether this young fellow may not go astray in another and even a still more dangerous direction. They say his politics are, dear me, shocking.'

'Not a bit of it,' replied Mr Broadacres. 'It isn't in the Heath blood to be radical. But his wife, she rules the roast, you see—and a devilish pretty woman too; I could find it in my heart to forgive her anything.'

'But that fellow, Harvey Gerard, her father—why, he's a downright sans-culotte, sir.'

'The Gerard's are bound to be, my dear sir,' returned the jolly squire. 'All these things are a question of family; it's nothing but that. I am told there is some French blood in him.'

'We want nothing of that sort down in Midshire,' responded Mr Flinthert, shaking his head.

'But we have got it, you see, my friend, and therefore we must make the best of it. It was all very well to ignore Gerard while he was a new-comer at the Dovecot, although, mind you, he was always a gentleman, every inch of him, notwithstanding his queer opinions; but now that he is become so nearly connected with Sir Marmaduke, and living at the Hall half his time, why, the county must make up its mind to receive him.'

'I shall let him perceive, however, that it does so—so far at least as I am concerned—upon sufferance, and, as it were—what is the word?—ay, vicariously.'

'Very good,' observed Mr Broadacres drily. 'I am not quite clear as to your meaning; but if you intend to put Harvey Gerard down, I do not think you will meet with any very triumphant success. Why, Sir Massingberd here, who would have grappled with the devil, was tripped up and thrown by this man with the greatest ease.'

'Nevertheless, I shall give him my cold shoulder,' observed Mr Flinthert stiffly; 'although I shall studiously avoid being rude.'

'Faith, I would recommend your doing that, my

friend,' laughed the jolly squire. 'If you turned your back upon Harvey Gerard instead of your shoulder, my belief is that he'd kick you.'

'That he'd do what?' exclaimed Mr Barnardistone Flinthert, late high-sheriff and present magistrate and *custos rotulorum* of Midshire.

'That he'd take advantage of the opportunity, that's all,' returned Mr Broadacres quietly. 'No, no, sir, with a man like Gerard, all good Tories should keep on good terms. One can't hang him, you know, like a radical tailor, and therefore it's quite worth while to make ourselves appear to the best advantage. A stupid slight to a clever man has often done more harm to the cause of good government than a whole regiment of dragoons can remedy.'

'O curse his cleverness!' responded Mr Flinthert savagely. 'I'm for no such milk-and-water measures. I think it's the duty of somebody to tell young Marmaduke'—

'Well, say its *yours*,' interrupted Mr Broadacres.

'It's a positive duty, I say, that somebody should go to this baronet, and tell him frankly that all this leniency to poaching fellows, and liberty to the rabble, cannot but lead to harm. "You're a young man," he should be told, "and don't understand these things; but that is the opinion of the county, and it behoves you to know it."'

'That would do more harm than good, Mr Flinthert. You may depend upon it that Marmaduke Heath thinks for himself in these matters, notwithstanding that I dare say Gerard and his pretty daughter have had some influence. The young fellow naturally goes exactly counter to all that his uncle did before him. This holiday-making and mixture of high and low here, are themselves enough to make Sir Massingberd turn in his grave.'

'Ay, if he is in his grave,' responded Mr Flinthert darkly. 'But who knows whether he may not turn up some day after all; tell me that?'

'I can't tell you that,' responded Mr Broadacres; 'but I'll bet you ten guineas to one that he never does.'

'Ay, but if he did!' replied the other gloomily. 'If he was to appear this very day, for instance, what a scene it would be—what a revolution for some people!'

'Well, if he did, he'd find the property greatly improved—except that that right of way has been reopened through the Park: all his thieving servants dismissed; all his debts settled; and his mad gipsy wife amply provided for, and well content, I am told, among her vagabond friends.'

Conversations somewhat similar to the above were being held all over the lawn, for its denizens were not, like the lower classes, so bent upon mere physical enjoyment as to be dead to the delights of scandal. But when the great bell rang for their afternoon repast, which was to be partaken of in one enormous tent, and at one gigantic table, the upper part of which was reserved for the gentlefolks, such talk was hushed, of course, and congratulation of host and hostess and the infant heir was the only wear for every countenance. Not a word about the uncertainty of Sir Marmaduke's tenure of Fairburn was whispered over the good cheer, or a suggestion hazarded regarding the last proprietor's possible reappearance. Far less, we may be certain, was any hint at such matters let fall when the health of the future Sir Peter—

two generations from Somebody, and not to be associated with him upon any account—was proposed by Mr Broadacres, and drank with a genuine enthusiasm that brought the tears into his mother's eyes, who with many a fair county dame graced the banquet as spectators. Then Mr Long rose up and spoke of Marmaduke as one whom he had known and loved from his youth up, and the cheering rose tumultuous (but especially at the tenants' table, because they knew him best), and was heard afar by the peasantry who were dining likewise elsewhere, and who joined in it uproariously, although they had already paid due honours to their lord, so that all the Park was filled with clamour. To both these toasts, Sir Marmaduke, aglow with happiness and excitement, the handsomest man by far in that great company, with a grateful smile upon his student lips, gave eloquent response.

But when Lucy's health was proposed by Mr Arable, in homely but fitting terms, dwelling upon her total lack of pride, her kindness to all that needed help, her beauty, which was sunshine to them all, then the young Squire lost his self-command. He rose to speak with evident embarrassment; he saw herself before him, watching him with eyes that had plenty of pride for *him* in them, and listening for his words as though his tongue dropped jewels; he knew that he could not contradict one word of praise that had been showered upon her, he could not mitigate for modesty a single phrase of her eulogium, because it was all true, and none but he knew how much more she was deserving of. While he stood there silent for a moment, but radiant with lips just parting for his opening sentence, there was a commotion at the far end of the tent. With that mysterious swiftness wherewith ill news pervades the minds of men, all knew at once some terrible occurrence had taken place. Several of the tenants rose, as if to intercept some person coming up towards the upper table, but others cried: 'Go on; it must be told.' For an instant, Lucy's glance flashed round to see that her child was safe in its nurse's arms, then made her way swiftly and silently to her husband's side. Before she reached it, before the man who bore the tidings could get nearly so far, the whisper had gone round: 'Sir Massingberd is found.'

I shall never forget Marmaduke's face when he heard those words: his colour fled; his eyes wandered timidly hither and thither; his lips moved, but no sound came from them. At the touch of his wife's hand upon his arm, however, a new life seemed to be instilled into him, and as a village boy came forward bearing a rusty something in his hand, he stretched his hand out for it, murmuring: 'What is this? Why do you bring this to me?' The boy was bashful, and gave no answer; but Farmer Arable stepped forward very gravely, and spoke as follows:

'Why, Mr Marmaduke, you see,' he said, unconsciously reserving the title for the man he had in his mind, 'that is the life-preserver Sir Massingberd always went about with in his woods at night; I know it by the iron ring by which a leathern strap fastened it round his wrist. Where did you find it, eh, boy?'

'Well, sir, we was a-playing at Hide-me and Bill Jervis, and Harry Jones and a lot of us, and the Wolsey Oak was Home. So, while it was the other side's turn to hide, and we was waiting for

them to cry "Hoop," we began to knife the tree a bit, to pass the time; and digging away at the bottom of the trunk, we made a hole, and presently came upon the head of this thing here, and dragged it out. Then we made a bigger hole, and please, sir, there was great big bones, and we couldn't pull them through. Then we was frightened, and called to Jem Meyrick, the keeper, as was in the booth close by; and he climbed up to the fork of the tree, and cried out that the Wolsey Oak was hollow, and there was a skeleton in it, standing up; and they do say as it's Sir Massingberd.'

While the boy was yet speaking, a knot of men came slowly up from the direction of the Oak, bearing something among them, and followed at a little distance by a vast crowd, all keeping an awful silence. When they got near the opening of the tent, they set their ghastly burden down upon the lawn; and we all went forth to look at it, including Marmaduke himself, with a face as pale as ashes, and clutching Lucy by the hand, as though he feared some power was about to tear her from him. I heard her whisper to him: 'This may not be Lost Sir Massingberd after all.'

Dr Sitwell heard her also, and at once officially replied: 'Oh, but it is, my lady: there has no man died in Fairburn for these thirty years, except the late baronet, who could have owned those bones. I will pledge my professional reputation that yonder man, when clothed in flesh and blood, was six feet four. What a large skull, and what gigantic thigh-bones!'

'Ay,' quoth Mr Remnant, the general dealer, who was kneeling down beside the skeleton and examining it with minuteness, as though it had been offered to him for sale, 'here is something hard and dry, with iron nails upon it, which was once a shooting-shoe—one of a pair, or I am much mistaken, which I sold to Sir Massingberd myself.'

'And here,' quoth Jem Meyrick, stepping forward, 'is summat as I think must have been the Squire's great gold chain, which I found at the bottom of the trunk. The Wolsey Oak is quite hollow, Sir Marmaduke, although none of us knew it. It is my belief that Sir Massingberd must have climbed up into the fork to look about him—for he seemed to be expecting poachers on that night—and that the rotten wood gave way beneath him, and let him down feet foremost into the trunk.'

Without doubt, this was the true explanation of the matter. The skeleton was found with the arms above the head, a position which had precluded self-extraction, although it was evident that the wretched man had made great efforts to escape from his living tomb, since what remained of the shoe of the right foot was much turned up, and retained deep marks of the pressure of the buckle. As I looked at these relics of humanity, the gipsy's curse recurred to my mind with dreadful distinctness: *May he perish, inch by inch, within reach of the aid that shall never come, ere the God of the Poor take him into His hand.*

It was a singular feature in the case, and one which was of course made to point its moral among the villagers, that had Sir Massingberd not closed the Park, and refused the right of way, he could scarcely have thus miserably perished, since the footpath, as I have said, absolutely skirted the tree in question; and people would have passed close by it at all hours. It reminded me of the evil fate of James I. of Scotland, who might have escaped

his murderers in the Blackfriars' Abbey at Perth, but for the simple fact that he had caused the mouth of a certain vault to be bricked up, because his tennis-balls were wont to roll through it. How long the wretched Squire had suffered before Death released him from his fangs, it was impossible to guess, or whether that terrible cry heard by Dick Westlock that same night, and by myself next morning, was indeed from the throat of Sir Massingberd in his agony. We were the two persons who had been nearest to the Wolsey Oak between the period of his entombment and the search instituted throughout the Chase. He must have been dead before *that*, for the seekers passed close beside the tree without the least suspicion of the ghastly Thing it held; unless, indeed, he had heard our voices, though, choked by that time by the falling dry-rot, he was unable to reply. No wonder the ravens had sought the Wolsey Oak, and croaked forth Doom therefrom so long!

#### CHAPTER XXIV.—L'ENVOI.

Weeks elapsed before Marmaduke Heath recovered from the shock of this discovery; but when he once began to do so, he grew up to be quite another man in body and mind. It was only by this change—when we saw him so strong and cheerful—that we got to estimate how powerful had been that sombre influence which had so long overshadowed him, and what great exertion it must have cost him to let it appear to us so little. The uncertainty of his tenure in Fairburn Hall, had secretly affected him very deeply, in spite of the wand of the good fairy. He went to France for a little trip with his father-in-law, for a thorough change, and there he had that duel thrust upon him of which we have incidentally made mention; let us not judge him harshly in that matter, for men of his day were as wanting in moral courage as they were ignorant of physical fear. Yet what a risk—ay, and what a selfish risk—he ran therein, let alone the unchristian wickedness of that wicked adventure. He never dared to reveal to Lucy what he had done; but he confessed it to Harvey Gerard, who rebuked him roundly for the crime; observing, however, to myself, not without some pride, that he had always averred Marmaduke was a fine fellow, and entertained a proper contempt for all bullies and scoundrels. The young baronet acted weakly, doubtless, but the duellist's blood was surely upon his own head. At all events, that was the view Marmaduke himself took of the matter, and there was now not a happier man in all Midshire than he; discharging the duties of his rank and position in a manner that won the applause of all his neighbours, sooner or later—although Mr Flinthert's applause came very late indeed.

Year after year, I was a frequent guest at Fairburn Hall, and never set foot in a house with inmates more blessed in one another. Year by year, Lucy seemed to grow in goodness, and even, as it seemed to me, in beauty; I saw her last with silver hair crowning her still unwrinkled brow, and since that day, no fairer sight has met these failing eyes.

Death has long released the noble soul of Harvey Gerard, but his name is borne not unworthily by a grandson as fearless as himself, and after it the hard-won letters V.C. In a sunny spot in the little churchyard at Fairburn lies my dear old



tutor; far from the iron rails which enclose the bones of the long missing baronet.

Sir Peter— But why should I further speak of death, and make parade of loss and change; an old man like me should, having told his tale, be silent, and not court stranger ears to 'gain the praise that comes to constancy.'

The last time I saw Fairburn, it lay in sunshine. There was no trace of that bad man whose deeds once overshadowed it, save that in one great space, close to the public footway through the Park, there was a vast bare ring, where grass, it was said, had never grown, although the Wolsey Oak, which had once stood above it, had been cut down for forty years and more. The place was cursed, so village gossip told, by Lost Sir Massingberd. This may be true or not. My tale itself may lie open to suspicion of untruth, and this and that, which have been therein narrated, have already been pronounced 'improbable,' 'impossible,' 'absurd.' To critics of this sort, I have only to express my regret that the mission of the author has in my case been reversed, and facts have fallen into such clumsy hands as to seem fiction. Let me add one extract from the works of an author popular in my young days, but now much oftener quoted than perused. He is describing a picture-sale attended by the *dilettanti*. A carking connoisseur is abusing some effort of an unhappy artist to portray nature. 'This fellow,' cries he, 'has even had the audacity to attempt to paint a fly! That a fly, forsooth!' and he flips at it with contemptuous fingers.

The fly flew away. *It was a real one!*

THE END.

#### WHAT IT COSTS TO SEE THE WORLD.

THERE is a science in travelling. Few ever learn it. Thousands set out every year on their summer pilgrimages to Switzerland and the Rhine; they leave many miles and much money behind them, and return to their homes without having acquired its first principles. It is a science that is not based on definitions, or learned from written treatises. It establishes even its axioms upon experience—sometimes harsh and sometimes pleasant—and often drives home its richest truths by hard knocks.

There are means and modes of travel unknown to the guide-books. There are cheap ways for the student and man of limited means to see and learn much for little money. The present writer has travelled over two continents at an expense less than that of many Englishmen in an ordinary three months' tour. It is my purpose to give some insight into the manner in which I did this; I shall therefore relate a few incidents, and transcribe a few notes, which may perhaps benefit some aspiring youth, whose purse is not commensurate with his love of sight-seeing and adventure.

I shall confine myself exclusively to the continent of Europe, for few will wish to follow me across the Atlantic. If any should do so, and have not the money for 'first-class,' or the stomach for 'steerage' on a steamer, let them go as I did, in a sailing-vessel. A real son of the sea would go in no other. It consumes, indeed, three or four weeks of time; but the fare is only a trifle more than the cost of living those three or four weeks on land. Then one has besides the assurance of comparative safety, and the feeling that one is going to the New World as Columbus did, with the silent

majesty of sail and wind. In a sailing-vessel, one learns more of the sublime and mysterious nature of the sea.

Several years ago, I spent a year on the continent for twenty-five pounds, studying at the university of Heidelberg, and travelling during the whole of the vacations. I was then a very young man, and though I have often since been over the same scenes, it has never been with equal enjoyment. It was with me then a matter of dire necessity. I could command no more money, yet had my heart set on pursuing my studies and on seeing the continent. The information that I was to receive no more remittances came upon me suddenly. My feelings were as melancholy as one would naturally imagine; but my actions were very different from those of a fellow-student (a German), who, under almost the same circumstances, jumped off the Neckar Bridge, and drowned himself. I immediately set about retrenchment. I found and rented a room for two guildens (3s. 4d.) per month, and such a room! It was on the next story to the clouds. It seemed to be cut into the high gable of the dingy old German house by some freak or after-thought of the architect. It was reached by interminable staircases, and through a long hall or passage-way, whose unplastered walls were hung with the rubbish of many generations. It was just large enough to permit of my turning round, after furnishing nooks and corners for a bed, a bookcase, a chair, a washstand, and a small hemispherical table; but all was neat and clean; for my room was subject, like the rest of the German world, to the regular Saturday's inundation of soap and water. Directly opposite, on the other side of the narrow street, but far, far below, was the shop of a sausage-maker. If I had been an enthusiast in mechanics, I should have found much consolation in this fact, as well as a great deal 'to lead hope on;' because a sausage-maker's apprentice is really, if not perpetual motion itself, a strong inductive argument in favour of its future discovery. The one to whom I have alluded kept up a continual hacking day and night, week-day and Sunday. The sound of his meat-axe met my ears the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. It was my *Matin* and my *Angelus* bell.

But by a principle of compensation, which is one of the kindest things in nature, this little nook had advantages of which prouder apartments could not boast. I never had before or since a room in which I could apply myself to study so assiduously or with so great a zest. It seemed to be haunted with the great spirits of those who have trimmed their lamps in garrets, and left the world better for their toils. This might have been a boyish hallucination; but I shall always believe that the most glorious view of the famous Heidelberg Castle, the *Molkenkur*, and the lofty peak of the *Kaiserstuhl*, is to be seen from the one narrow window of my aerial niche in the dark German gable. The old castle frowned down upon me from the brow of the mountain just above my head, and often of an evening have I leaned upon my little window-sill, and gazed up at its ruined battlements and ivy-mantled towers. As they grew dimmer and grayer in the waning light, the rents and seams of centuries have disappeared, and the palace of the old electors has stood before me in all its ancient pride.

It was not in the matter of my room alone that

I introduced retrenchment ; I had long before the reception of my bad news bidden adieu to beef-steaks for breakfast, and conformed myself to the cup of coffee and piece of dry bread of the German's morning repast. But I now left the *café* where I had before indulged in these luxuries and betook myself to a baker's shop, where a breakfast of the same kind was furnished me for four kreuzers—about a penny and a farthing. If I could sometimes have wished for a more liberal allowance of sugar in my coffee, I never could complain of a lack of sweetness in the morning gossip of the baker's red-cheeked daughter. I obtained a homely abundant dinner in a private family at one gulden and twenty-six kreuzers per week, making it a fraction over fourpence per day for that important meal. My supper I took at a *Gasthaus*, in company with some theological students, at the cost of about twopence.

Many who read this, and who have spent large sums in endeavouring to live cheaply in the same city, will of course believe nothing of it. They have paid dearly for the privilege of being Englishmen. They date their experiences from hotels supplied with waiters who speak our language, and have dealt at shops on whose windows they have seen blazoned in golden letters : 'English spoken.' They have in reality paid the teacher who taught those waiters and those shopkeepers to murder their own mother-tongue.

By the laws of German universities, a matriculated student is not obliged to pay for more than one lecture a *semester* ; I managed, therefore, to pay for the cheapest, and attended as many more as I liked ; so about two pounds a year were my collegiate expenses. To confess the truth, my calendar and that of the university did not always agree. I often took vacations in session-time, in the shape of long excursions on foot ; and sometimes disappeared from Heidelberg for weeks together. My *Hausfrau*—she that received the princely income of two gulden per month for my room—at first shewed symptoms of anxiety about me ; but she soon learned to be surprised at no wild freak of her aerial lodger. By these tours on foot—the only philosophical way of travelling—and by the occasional aid of the cheap third-class cars of that country, I visited all parts of Germany ; and learned more of the character and habits of its odd beer-drinking people, than I ever could have learned at the great hotels and in the first-class railway carriages. During the long vacations, I extended my explorations into remoter parts—into the Tyrol, Switzerland, Italy, and France.

I travelled in a way in which probably no Englishman has ever travelled before or since—namely, disguised as a *Handwerksbursche*. These *Handwerksburschen*, let me say—for they are unknown to nations under free constitutional governments—are a sort of fossil remains of feudalism. They are young fellows, half journeymen, half apprentices, who are obliged to wander for two or three years from city to city, working at their trades. They finally return to their homes weary and poor—having learned nothing but the rough side of the world—to make what is called their 'master-piece.' If this pass muster, it entitles them to style themselves masters of their trades. They grow out of that odd illiberal principle which compels the son to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Yet for all

the narrow-minded enactments and regulations to crush their spirit, and make them miserable, they always walk on the sunny side of nature. They are a jolly, jovial sort of vagabonds, who have not the chance to be dishonest, if they had the inclination. Disguised in their blouse, I have spent many a happy hour toiling along the same road with them, listening to their stories and merry songs. If I meet one of them on the highway, he stops, offers me his hand, and exchanges a kindly word ; he takes out his pipe, asks me to fill mine from his tobacco-pouch, and tells me all he knows of the road he has passed over. He never lodges in a city, unless he has work there. The village inn is his castle ; here he obtains his bed at night, and his breakfast in the morning, for seven kreuzers—not quite two-and-a-half pence—and trudges on smoking and singing through all Europe. This is the *Handwerksbursche*, poor but merry ; the knight-errant of the bundle and staff ; the troubadour and minnesinger of the nineteenth century.

In Switzerland, for instance, where almost every one travels as a pedestrian, and where thousands of our countrymen blister their inexperienced feet at the rate of at least ten francs per day, I have journeyed sumptuously, thanks to my disguise, for thirty sous. When addressed in French, if my broken speech was noticed, it was supposed that I was from one of the German cantons ; and in the same manner, if my bad German was detected, I was set down as from one of the French cantons. This gratuitous naturalisation on one day, and expatriation on the next, had no bad effect whatever on my health ; whereas it had the best possible result on my purse. My blouse was a protection not only to the respectable suit of clothes which I wore under it, but against all the impositions practised upon travellers.

When I arrived at a large city or watering-place, anywhere on my travels, I generally hired a room for a week, found a cheap place to get my meals, and after settling prices, divested myself of my disguise, and 'did' the galleries, promenades, or *Kursaals* to the accompaniment of kid gloves and immaculate linen. This system of metamorphosis was not, however, without its inconveniences and occasional embarrassments. I remember one of the many.

At Baden-Baden, I made the acquaintance of an Englishman, a retired tradesman, a plain sort of person who had been successful in business. He had evidently made his money honestly, and was spending it freely. We happened to meet often during our stay, and finally he made me acquainted with his wife and daughter. We met again at several places, Homburg among others. I began to feel quite a tender interest in the daughter, who was rather pretty. I thought her angelic, and tried to persuade myself that fate had some peculiar design in bringing us together so often. I cursed the cadaverousness of my purse, that compelled me to invent all manner of excuses when invited to leave my hotel and come to theirs. The wife, it seems to me, as I think of it now, had a higher idea of the dignity conferred upon her family by her husband's success than the husband himself ; and the daughter's appreciation of their good-fortune was still more exalted than that of her mother. It never struck me then that my services in interpreting their wishes to the German world were the

principal attraction I had for this interesting family. Far from it. I was so led astray by the *ignis-fatuus* eyes of the daughter, that I one day actually sacrificed five francs for a dinner in their company.

They had left Homburg for Wiesbaden. I was unavoidably prevented from going on the same day and train. So a day or two afterwards, I might have been seen—and the worst of it is, I was seen—a little the worse for a long day's journey, trudging slowly through one of the less frequented streets of Wiesbaden, in my blouse, my staff in my hand, and my pack upon my back. As ill-luck would have it, the wife and daughter were going along the same street, and in the same direction, whether shopping or lost, I have never learned. Just as they overtook me, I turned my face up at the sign of a friendly-looking *Gasthaus* of the cheaper kind; and as I was on the point of entering, my eye met theirs. They both stopped and stared. I felt my face burning, but could not muster courage to speak. The daughter suddenly caught her mother's arm, and pulled her away, exclaiming as she went: 'I always thought he was an impostor; and now I know he is one of those horrid Jew peddlers!'

These were the last words I ever heard from the idol of my premature adoration. It is needless to say that my stay at Wiesbaden was extremely short. I left there with the thorough conviction, that it is easier to travel than to make love successfully on twenty-five pounds a year.

But the glory of pedestrianism is not in cities; it is in the broad highway, on the banks of mighty rivers, or in the narrow footpath winding over the mountains. There is such a pleasure and pride in the consciousness that one can go where and when one will, without waiting on coaches or trains. Thirty, forty, or fifty good miles left behind, in one day, by the means of locomotion nature has given to every one, is not only a consolation to sleep upon at a village inn, but makes the sleep sounder and sweeter. I defy any man not to be proud of his strength, when he finds, as most every one will after a little practice, that he can make thirty miles on foot, day after day, with perfect ease.

It is, however, just to state that village inns are not always paradises. The hostess, sometimes, has more lodgers in her beds than she receives money for; but a practised eye invariably detects such places; and never exposes the body to their perils. Every village has at least one respectable inn. Before experience had taught me which it was, I had good reason to believe that the tortures of the *Vehmgericht*, the old secret tribunals of Germany, were not the things of the past which the world thought them. I had frequent occasion, too, for what might be called an equanimity of stomach. I arrived one evening, for instance, at a small, desolate village in the remote eastern part of Bavaria, near the Austrian border. I was weary and hungry; but before mine host of the inn would have anything to do with me, he sent me on a wild chase through innumerable narrow crooked alleys in search of the burgomaster, to deliver my passport into his hands, and to obtain his gracious permission to remain over-night in the place. The entrance to the mansion of that dignity was through a cattle-yard. He had probably never in his life heard of the language of my passport; but this did not prevent his looking at it with an official air of infinite wisdom. I returned to the inn fortified with the requisite credentials. The hostess

now appeared, and asked me what I would <sup>do</sup> addressing me familiarly in the second person singular. Her long, lank frame was attired in the abominable costume of the Bavarian peasantry. I could compare her to nothing but a giant specimen of the Hungarian heron. The same room served as parlour and kitchen. I sat patiently and watched her kindling the fire in the great earthen stove, indulging my mind, as hungry men are wont to do, with rich visions of imaginary banquets. What was my horror to see her take the eggs which I had ordered, break them one by one into her greasy leathern apron, and commence beating them vigorously with a pewter spoon! As soon as I recovered my presence of mind, I considered the folly of remonstrating with her; and with a great effort, mildly remarked that she had misunderstood me: I wanted my eggs boiled. By this stratagem, I preserved my disguise, and achieved a cleanly meal, in defiance of the leathern apron.

Such are a few of the experiences which have led me to conclude that it does not necessarily cost so much to see the world as is generally believed. The occasional inconveniences and petty annoyances are forgotten in the real pleasure of him who travels with a proper spirit. The sight of a sunrise from the Righi is more than compensation for putting up with a poor breakfast. And the candid traveller, however light his purse, need never return dyspeptic or misanthropic; pure air and hearty exercise in the Alps and on the Danube, cannot but do him physical good; while he will find in the human nature with which he comes in contact in every land, the sum of the good invariably preponderating over that of the evil.

#### EDIBLE INSECTS.

THE first dwellers upon earth were vegetarians in the strictest sense of the word. Although Adam was given the dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, his diet was limited to herbs bearing seed, and trees bearing seed-yielding fruit. It was not until after the flood that man was authorised to indulge his carnivorous propensities, when he received permission to eat of every moving thing that lived. Under the Mosaic dispensation, the dietary of the chosen people was controlled by the division of the animal world into clean and unclean, or eatable and uneatable; and in the latter class was included every flying creeping thing with four feet, with the exception of 'the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind;' so we may conclude that at this early period of the world's history, the insect tribes contributed but little to the sustenance of mankind. The progress of time has wrought small changes in this respect. Man does not take kindly to such unsubstantial fare; and the Gentile world, unfettered by dietetical laws, and with every disposition to enlarge the means of satisfying its physical wants, has added but little to the insect-food prescribed by the Jewish lawgiver.

There is nothing particularly tempting in the appearance of the locust, and its introduction into the dietary of humanity can scarcely have been the result of natural selection. We fancy the first locust-eaters must have been driven to the experiment by those famine-creators having left



nothing else for them to eat. Be this as it may, the locust has long enjoyed a high repute in Persia, Syria, and Arabia, and become an important item of eastern diet. When corn is scarce, the Arabs even grind locusts in their mills, and convert them into a sort of bread; but they are usually eaten with rice and dates, flavoured with salt and spice, roasted alive, or fried in oil, in which last case they are said to resemble crayfish. In the provision-markets of the Levant, the lovers of this delicacy may buy it fresh or salted in any quantity. Dampier tells us the Philippine Islanders used to capture a species of locust in nets, and parch them over a fire in an earthen pan till their legs and wings dropped off, and their heads and backs turned the colour of boiled shrimps. 'Their bodies,' says he, 'being full, would eat very moist, and their heads would crackle in one's teeth. I did once eat of this dish, and liked it well enough.' The people of Teneriffe found it less to their taste when their vineyards were destroyed in 1649 by an invasion of locusts, who kept possession of the island for four months. Several who ate them died in consequence, and the Teneriffians thereupon not only declined to repeat the experiment, but refused to eat pigs fattened upon them. The Calmucks, on the other hand, although equally disinclined to dine off the locusts themselves, have a *penchant* for the flesh of sheep and other animals fed upon them.

'The Indians of Chili, lacking maize, rice, or wheat,' says Father Ovalle (1649), 'have invented a strange sort of bread made of locusts.' Taking notice where the insects alighted to rest, which was generally in the tallest thickets, they waited till night came, and then creeping cautiously to the place, set fire to the bushes, and reduced it and its occupants to ashes. The ashes were afterwards ground to fine powder and made into bread.

The locust-eating propensity of the people of Africa was well known to the ancients. Herodotus speaks of a Libyan nation feeding on locusts dried in the sun and eaten with milk after the fashion of the modern negroes of Gambia; and Diodorus, while he records the existence of the *Acridophagi*, or locust-eaters of Ethiopia, seems anxious to deter his epicurean countrymen from imitating the example, informing them that the misguided Africans who indulged in this strange food never lived more than forty years, their diet generating winged insects under the skin, which caused such intolerable itching that the sufferer at last tore them out with his nails, and died in indescribable torture. The locust is held in high esteem in Egypt, Barbary, and Morocco; and Shakespeare was not unmindful of the fact when he made Iago reason thus of Othello: 'These Moors are changeable in their wills; the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as colicoquintida.' The Abyssinians refuse to eat the locust, and when the example of John the Baptist is quoted in justification of the practice, reply, like some biblical commentators, by denying that the saint ever encouraged it. The locust, they say, that he ate with his wild honey, was the fruit of a tree called by the same name. The people of Sennaar are of a contrary opinion as regards the merits of the insect, which they prepare for digestion by removing the legs and wings, and then roasting them upon an iron dish. Mansfield Parkyns often tasted this delicacy

while among them, and gives it the negative praise of having nothing disagreeable in its flavour, while he owns he did not consider it a particularly delicious dish. Some of the tribes of Southern Africa have little or no animal food, but depend entirely upon the locust and a few roots and fruits; in fact, as Dr Livingstone declares, 'the locusts are a real blessing to the country'; and that the natives look upon them as such, is evident from their rain-doctors performing incantations for the purpose of bringing an abundant supply. The doctor says, that when pounded into meal, and mixed with a little salt, they make not only a palatable food, but one that will keep uninjured for months. Boiled, he found them disagreeable, but roasted, they had a strong vegetable flavour, varying with the plants upon which they had fattened, and the experienced traveller came to the conclusion that he preferred them to shrimps. To Gordon Cumming they proved acceptable enough when other food was scarce, and he speaks of them as fattening and wholesome food for bird, beast, and man.

When Humboldt was travelling up the Rio Negro, he once came upon four Indians seated round a brushwood fire, deep in the enjoyment of lumps of black-spotted white paste. Upon examination, the black spots turned out to be large ants dried and blackened by smoke, of which several bags full were suspended over the fire. The paste was made of cassava flour, and tasted as if it had been mixed with rancid butter, the insect ingredient being the white ant or termite, famous for the voracity of its appetite and its constructive abilities. Herrena had long before recorded that the Panches of the Reyno de Granada subsisted chiefly upon this insect crushed into cakes, and according to him, they reared it in yards specially for the purpose. The natives of the country about Sierra Leone equally appreciate the culinary value of the white ant. At swarming time, numbers of the insects fall into the rivers lying in their line of march; these are quickly skimmed off the water with calabashes by the negroes. When they have collected as many as they desire, they parch them over a gentle fire, and eat them by handfuls, throwing them into their mouths like so many comfits. Dr Winterbottom thought them sweet, delicious, wholesome, and nourishing; others have described them as resembling sweet-almond paste, sugared marrow, and sweetened cream; but there is one drawback to their good qualities—over-indulgence in them is apt to induce dysentery. In other parts of Africa, the ants are obtained by digging into the ant-hill, and waiting till the labourers come forth to repair damages, when they are swept into a vessel much after the manner in which the ant-eater sweeps them into his mouth. Dr Livingstone says: 'While swarming, they appear like snow-flakes floating about in the air, and dogs, cats, hawks, and almost every bird, may be seen busily devouring them. The natives, too, profit by the occasion, and actively collect them for food, they being about half an inch long, as thick as a crow-quill, and very fat. When roasted, they are said to be good, and somewhat resemble grains of boiled rice. An idea may be formed of this dish by what occurred in the Bay of Zouga. The Bayeiye chief, Palani, visiting us while eating, I gave him a piece of bread and preserved apricots; and as he seemed to relish it much, I asked him

if he had any food equal to that in his country. "Ah," said he, "did you ever taste white ant?" As I never had, he replied: "Well, if you had, you never could have desired to eat anything better!"

The aborigines of Australia know the worth of the white ant when mixed with fern roots, but neither that delectable compound, nor the grubs, worms, and spiders in which they delight, stands so high in their opinion as the *womela*, a species of *Psylla*, one member of which genus is attached to the English box. The leaves of the African mopané-tree are covered with another *Psylla*, emitting a sweet gummy excretion, which is carefully collected by the natives and strung in conjunction with a large caterpillar, called the *lopáné*, found in the same tree. A pass in the Bamarjerato Hills has received the name of *Manakalongive* or *Unicorn Pass*, after a large edible caterpillar with an erect horn-like tail, common in the vicinity; and the children of the great traveller ate another large caterpillar, which the natives gave them when meat was scarce in the camp, with considerable relish. The large fat white worms found in the cabbage of the sago-tree is eaten in the East Indies; but all edible caterpillars must yield the place of honour to the grov-grov, or palmworrow, living on the sap of a species of palm-tree, and growing to the size and thickness of a man's thumb. It is produced from the spawn of the black snout-beetle, and when cooked, by being fried with butter and salt, has the appearance of a small sausage. Captain Stedman declares the flavour of the palmworrow to be like a combination of all the spices of India; but Von Sack suspects that the captain did not taste it in its native simplicity, when he says it rather resembles very delicate marrow.

The Siamese are fond of spider's eggs and brown grasshoppers, and the women of Egypt feed on masked beetles, to arrive at the perfection of obesity that constitutes beauty on the banks of the Nile. In Europe, insect-diet has found no favour, but insects have, nevertheless, been eaten, as some teetotallers take brandy, for medicinal purposes. Wood-lice, bruised in wine, beaten to powder, or swallowed as pills, were once deemed a sovereign remedy for asthmatic complaints. Mrs Carter, writing to a lady-friend, says: "I beg you will not neglect to take the millipedes. It is a most excellent medicine for the obstruction you mention in your glands, and besides, may be of use to your eyes." Shroeder says old men in the West Indies swallowed them alive to strengthen their backs, and Pliny mentions wood-lice and green-lizards, boiled down together, as a remedy for paralysis. Spiders swallowed alive or smothered in treacle, was an Irish prescription for ague. Live lice were held good for the yellow jaundice. "Die of the jaundice, yet have the cure about you, lice, large lice, begot of your own dust and the heat of the brick-kilns." Walton says the Jews must have been taught this remedy by revelation. Avenenna prescribed the common bed-pest in cases of hysteria and quartan fever. Duke Basilourtzy commanded his subjects, in Moscow, to send him 'a measure full of live fleas,' in order that he might carry out some curative experiment. The citizens, instead of sending the fleas, sent word that he demanded an impossibility, since, if they could, as was most improbable, collect such a number in their well-ordered city, they certainly could not measure

them, 'because of their leaping out.' Basilourtzy, in return, agreed to dispense with their unclean contribution, but ordered the citizens to forward him seven thousand roubles instead. Butler tells how poor Hudibras suffered when

Purging, comfits, and ants' eggs,  
Had almost brought him off his legs.

But the insect itself must have very different qualities, if the testimony of John Heydon is of any value. He directs us to distil half-a-dozen handfuls of common ants—preferring those with a sourish smell—in spirits of wine; and by so doing, assures us we shall produce an excellent spirit for stirring up courage. 'John Cassimere, Palgrave of the Rhine, and Seyfried of Collen, generals against the Turks, did always drink of it when they went to fight, to increase magnanimity and courage, which it did, even to admiration.'

#### SHAKSPEARE.

##### A CELEBRATION ODE.

Ring out, glad bells, your blithest lays  
In honour of our poet's fame;  
Join, heart and voice, with loud acclaim,  
To flood the land with grateful praise.

Not all the trophies he hath won  
Are worthy of his skill divine.  
Bow, nation—bow before his shrine,  
And own your greatest, grandest son.

No hero, crushing human wrongs—  
No champion, bleeding for the right,  
Hath equalled in the great world's fight  
Our conqueror in the strife of tongues.

O myriad mind! whose matchless lyre  
Could only speak with living word,  
Whose sound, full oft, dead hearts hath stirred  
To fervent breathings of desire;

The music thou dost richly pour,  
In silver cadence far and near,  
Like Oberon's love-juice, charms the ear,  
And all who listen must adore.

First scholar of Dame Nature's throng,  
And by no other teacher taught,  
He dug his treasure-caves of thought  
From Avon with its silver song.

And yet, though men have yearned to find,  
Through thrice a hundred years of toil,  
Those Alpine heights of unturned soil  
Where towers the summit of his mind;

Their mightiest efforts are but vain  
To grasp its greatness—scale its height;  
The mountain top eludes the sight  
Of weary watchers on the plain!

His glory glimmers from afar,  
Through hecatombs of buried years;  
Yet fairer now its light appears,  
And queenlier than the evening-star.

Let all, to-day, his name revere;  
Ring, happy land, with grateful praise!  
And crown with never-fading bays  
Our poet, preacher, sage, and seer.

Chime on, ye tuneful bells—chime on!  
Proclaim to all our generous pride;  
And let the nations far and wide  
Behold how Britain loves her son!

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